Specter Opposes Wiretaps As Weapon Against Crime

Harrisburg — District Attorney Arlen Specter said today that "wiretapping and eavesdropping are serious invasions of individual liberty."

Speaking to the State Government Committee on a Senate bill, labeled Protection of Privacy Act, Specter said the threat to personal liberties far outweighed the utility of wiretapping in combatting organized crime.

As for crimes of violence, said Specter, wiretapping would have no measurable effect.

Specter said the traditional means of fighting organized crime had proved effective in Pennsylvania as evidenced by the investigatory Grand Jury convened by him to investigate corruption in government and industry.

Among the dangers of wiretapping and eavesdropping, said Specter, is their potential for illicit use.

"Wiretapping and eavesdropping can be sources of information for blackmail, extortion, political harassment, or other forms of repression. Simply stated, they can be sources of information for what is nobody's business," he said.

Finally, wiretapping or eavesdropping lend themselves to widespread atuse, said Specter.

"We can realistically anticipate the use of tiny electronic devices which can be attached to a person's clothing in order to transmit his every word, whether he is at home or strolling on some "deserted" beach.

"This is too great a price to pay in the loss of personal liberty when compared with the gains made in the war on crime," he concluded.

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